Foley

London Printed for John Kidgell at y. Golden Ball near Grays Inn Gate in Holborn

THE VANITY OF THE CREATURE.

By the AUTHOR OF THE Whole Duty of Man, &c.

Together with a LETTER Prefix'd, sent to the Bookseller, relating to the AUTHOR.

ECCLES. 1. 2.
Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity.

LONDON: Printed for *John Kidgell* at the *Golden-Ball* near *Grays-Inn*-Gate in *Holborn*. 1684.

TO THE
Bookſeller.

Mr. Kidgell,

YOu *having Printed that moſt Excellent piece, Entituled,* The Whole Duty of Man, Part II. *Wherein the Author of that Book hath diſcovered much Judgment, together with a compoſure of Elegancy of Style and Expreſſion, I having a good opinion of your Converſation by a little acquaintance with you, at the requeſt of my Kinſman* Mr. G. L. I. *ſend you an account of the little Tract you are Printing, called* The Vanity of the Creature; *which was, (if my word may paſs for it) written by the firſt Author of* The Whole Duty of Man. *That he*

was a perſon of great Learning and Piety, I think no man will gain-ſay; which if he did, he would be ſufficiently confuted by that his moſt Excellent and Divine Treatiſe. He was alſo of that Chriſtian-like temper of meekneſs and modeſty, rarely to be found in the beſt of men of theſe flagitious times, that out of a perfect enmity and averſion to vain-glory, he purpoſely concealed his name; which hath been the occaſion of as many conjectures (almoſt) to know who he was, as there have been ſcrutinies to find out the head-ſpring and original ſource of the River Nile. *For my part, I ſhall not (though I could) break the rules of Decency and good Manners, to ſatisfie the itching deſire of the over-curious, in divulging that which the Author himſelf was ſo careful to conceal.* ------Cum vides velatam, quid inquiris in rem abſconditam? *This is certain, and I will adventure at the boldneſs to ſay, that all thoſe ſeveral Diſcourſes which have appeared abroad in the World un-*

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der our Authors name, were not written by him; but whoever were the Authors, it cannot be denyed, but that they have written them with the greatest Judgment, Learning, and Piety imaginable, and that they are only worthy of imitating so great a Divine as our Author.

Yours in all Civil Offices,

J. L.

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Vanity of the Creature.

THE Creatures Vanity and Mutability is so great, that it should be the greatest incentive to us to look to the Supream good, as the only Center of our Happiness and Felicity. Since the *Summum bonum* of Man lies in something more sublime and excellent than any Created Being, it's not in vain for him, in order to attaining the true object of his real Happiness, to take a Contemplative view of the Creatures vanity, which is most perspicuously demonstrable even in Monarchies, which *Bodin* tells us, are more durable than Popular States, because less subject to be divided, (Unity being the great Preserver of all things:) and yet have these had, as the Moon, not only their

increaſe and full light, but alſo their wain and changes, and this ſometimes in a moment. That as in Muſick you ſhall hear ſometimes a ſtring tun'd up to its *ultimum potentiæ*, as high as it will bear, and preſently depreſſed again to the loweſt Key, and another elevated, yet both of them breathing but light Airs, and of ſhort continuance: So may you ſee aMonarchy now wound up to the higheſt pitch of Happineſs, and by and by let down again into the loweſt depths of miſery. This is Gods doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

And here I ſhall begin with thoſe Empires and Monarchies that were moſt famous among the reſt.

For how ſoon was the *Aſſyrian* or *Babylonian* Monarchy ſwallow'd up by the *Perſian*, the *Perſian* by the *Greek* or *Macedonian* Empire, and the *Greek* by the *Roman*? which the Prophet *Daniel* preſents unto us, by the Gold, Silver, Braſs, and Iron, whereof *Nebuchadnezzars* Image conſiſted, *Dan.*2.32. The diſſo-

dissolution of one, as in natural things, so here, being still the generation of another; and again, the erection of the later being the destruction of the former.

And as for the *Roman* Monarchy, their own Historian can tell us of that, how it had both its Infancy, Youth, Manhood, and Old age, as it were by turns: As its Infancy under Kings, its Youth under Consuls, its Manhood from the first *Punick* War unto the time of *Augustus Cæsar*, and from that time its Old age under the succeeding Emperours; until at length that solid Body was torn asunder by the struglings of her own Children, into the Eastern and Western Empires, whereof the former was soon eaten out by the *Turks* and *Saracens*, and the later also fell away much, after a little revolution of time, by the falling off of divers Nations from her, each of which after they had pluck'd off their own feathers from the *Roman* Eagle, left her almost naked; As the *Franks* and *Burgundians*

in *France*, the *Goths* in *Spain*, the *Normans* and *Lombards* in *Italy*, together with the *Engliſh* and *Scots* in *Britain*: until at the laſt caſt the *Roman* Monarchy began a little to recal her ſelf into *Germany*, where ſhe hath held up ſince little more than the bare name of the Empire. So that Viciſſitude you ſee is the great Empreſs of the world, unto whoſe unſtay'd Dominion all earthly Powers and Principalities muſt be ſubject, even thoſe that are of the firſt Magnitude, much more others that move in a lower Orb.

And of theſe I ſhall ſingle out only three, which I conceive moſt eminent, to be inſtanced in for this point.

The firſt is *Judea*, whoſe Government was Monarchically ſetled by God himſelf; yet how oft did ſhe change her Lords and Maſters, yielding her ſelf as it were ſucceſſively firſt to the *Babylonian*, and after that to the *Roman*, *Perſian*, *Saracen*, *Chriſtian*, *Ægyptian*, and now to the *Turkiſh* power? That as the

the Poet ſpake of *Troy*, *Fuit Ilium*; ſo may we of *Jeruſalem*, her *Metropolis*, *Fuit Hieroſolyma*, that *Jeruſalem* was; She *was great among the Nations*, or *Domina Gentium*, *the Lady of the Nations*, but now, *Non ſic ut olim*, it hath not been with her for theſe many Generations paſt, *as in former days*, (to uſe *Job*'s words in his twenty ninth Chapter, ſecond and third verſes) *when God preſerved her, when his Candle ſhined upon her head, and when by that light ſhe walked through darkneſs*; but *Servants have ruled over her, and there was none to deliver her out of their hands.* Which is a good Lecture of Mutability to other Kingdoms and their Mother-cities. For *Jeruſalem* was once a holy and happy City, and had been happy ſtill, had ſhe but continued holy; but that failing, *How is her Gold become dim, how is her fine Gold chang'd into Droſs!* as ſhe complains her ſelf.

The ſecond Example I produce here is *Naples*, which we may well call the

Ball of Providence: And indeed so it was, being bandied from one Lord to another ten several times, before it came to lie (as now it doth) at the foot of *Spain.* For being a Countrey at first diversly peopled, it was upon the division allotted to the Eastern Emperours, but from them forc'd by the *Almains*, and so to the *Greeks* and *Saracens*, and then successively hurried about to the *Normans*, *Germans*, *French*, *Hungarians*, *Arragonoys*, and from them to the *French* again; till in the end the *Spaniard* seized upon it: and whether it will continue long with him or no, is very uncertain; especially if we remember how of late years a poor Fisherman (*Massinello* by name) snatch'd up the Reins of Government from him, and (had not God otherwise determined of that Kingdom, by infatuating that Mushrome-King) for ought we know, he might have run quite away with them; so slippery are all earthly Kingdoms!

3. But

3. But not to look out any longer to other Nations of *Christendom*, (methinks) we may instance this best by reflecting upon our selves. For you all know (I suppose) how the *Romans*, *Saxons*, *Danes*, and *Normans*, had each of them their several and alternate days of Lordship over this Nation; but yet because they did not know in those their days the things that belonged unto their Peace, how do we see the shadows of the night stretched out upon them, their Suns set with us, and their days shut in!

The longest day we read of, was that in *Joshuah*'s time, wherein though the Sun stood still in *Gibeon* for the space of a whole day, yet set it did at last.

The day of the *Romans* was long upon our Horizon, for the Sun of their prosperity shone here for the space of four hundred years and more; yet did it then go down as to us in this Nation, and Darkness here now doth lie upon it.

Again, the day of the *Saxons* continued five hundred years and upwards; That of the *Danes* two hundred fifty five years, or thereabouts.

And how long the day of the *Normans* hath lasted, every petty Almanack can tell us. I, and if none of those Suns come to rise again within our Hemisphere, (when the sins of this Nation are ripe, and call for Gods sickle to cut them down) it's beside his ordinary rule, which usually runs out all Humane things by a changeable circumference; for so *Solomon* tells us in his Book of *Ecclesiastes*, *That the Sun rises, and the Sun goes down, and hasteth to the place where he arose.*

Neither is this all, that the Powers and Principalities on earth are upon a daily turn, but as the *Primum Mobile* (you know) carries about the other Spheres; so do these carry about many other changes and alterations with them: As that of Religion, Laws, Liberties, Sciences, Customs, and such like.

Nay,

Nay, even the Houſes of God, which before to violate, was held a Crime inexpiable, yet are they now upon ſuch removes broken down without ſcruple; and the very Urns of the Dead, which have been always look'd upon as Sacred Cabinets to preſerve the Bodies of Gods Saints in for Eternity, yet are they now broken up, and their Aſhes thrown about, (ſuch is the unſetledneſs of all things here below) even as the vileſt Duſt upon the face of the earth.

Beloved, it hath been ever thus upon the converſion of ſuch great Bodies, and it is ſo ſtill: for never was there any converſion in this Land like to that our eyes have ſeen of late; That if any one ſhould have ſlept but ſome few years laſt paſt (as the Ancients fain of *Epimenides*) and ſhould have awaked again in theſe times, how would he wonder at thoſe ſtrange *Metamorphoſes* that are now among us, there being *Nova rerum facies*, A new face of things both in Church and State! Inſomuch,

(as

(as Mr. *Harding* ſpake ſometimes of *Rome*, That he did *quærere Romam in Roma*, That he did ſeek *Rome* in *Rome*, and could not find it,) ſo may we ſay now, That we may *quærere Angliam in Anglia*, That we may now ſeek for old *England* in our new *England*, and yet go without it, it is ſo much changed from what it was before.

And as we have ſeen much of this already, ſo who knows but we may come to ſee a great deal more hereafter? Since we know not what a Day may bring forth.

Secondly, Neither is this true only in Empires and Monarchies, but alſo in Cities and their popular Governments. *Etiam ſummis negatum eſt urbibus ſtare diu*, ſays the Moraliſt. And to this purpoſe tends that of the Author to the *Hebrews*, Heb. 13.14. *We have here no abiding City, but we look for one to come, whoſe foundation is in the heavens.*

There is then no City on earth, nor any kind of Government in it that e-

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ver ſtood up long in one poſture, none that ever was, or ſhall be abiding. *Paſs ye up to* Calneh *and ſee*, ſays the Prophet, *Amos* 6. 2. *and from hence go to* Hemath *the Great*, *and ſo to* Gath *of the* Philiſtins. So, paſs ye up to *Athens* the eye of *Greece* for Knowledge and humane Literature, and ſee; and from thence go to *Rome*, the Head of the Weſtern Empire, and ſo come to *Florence*, the Beauty of *Italy*; (for I forbear to name more, Examples in this kind being almoſt infinite) in all which you may read this truth at large.

And firſt for *Athens*: How many changes of Governours and Governments did ſhe endure? putting her ſelf off from Hereditary Kings to Archons, or Ariſtocratical Lords, who govern'd firſt for term of life, then decennially; and after theſe, to Democratical Rulers.

Next for *Rome*; how oft hath that City been alter'd by *Gauls*, *Hunnes*, *Goths* and *Vandals*?

Yea

Yea, how oft hath the Covernment of it been pass'd away from one hand to another?

It is mystically represented to us, *Rev.* 17.3. by the beast of seven heads, which is there interpreted by the seven Hills it is built upon, to be *Rome:* And according to the number of those Hills, to so many Masters did it submit it self, who had their several turns of supreme power and regiment over her; as *Kings*, *Consuls*, *Dictators*, *Decemviri*, *Tribunes*, *Emperours*, and *Popes*: under the last of which, I do not find that it was ever Besieged by any that took it not: such strange ebbings hath that Sea had experience of!

Last of all for *Florence.* It is strange to tell what various whirlings about that hath had in point of Supreme Rule and power. For at first the Nobility ruled it in an Aristocratical way. But a little after, some Grandees among the people wrested it to themselves; who being tired out with continual quarrel-

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lings one with another, (for the people were divided into three ranks) the middle sort of them took upon them the management of the State. And these also falling quickly together by the ears, the third and lowest sort became Masters of it. Which holding not long, by reason of their mutual discords, they yield themselves and the Government of their City unto *Charles* of *France*, Brother to *Lewis* the Ninth; who within a short time being invited to the Kingdom of *Naples*, and leaving only Deputies at *Florence*, the *Florentines* return to their Popular Government, and renew their Civil Wars among themselves For redress whereof, they send for the Duke of *Athens*, and give up all to him. But shortly they supposing themselves to be brought in bondage, and to be despoiled of their Liberty by the fear of his Guard, banish him the City, and within less than one years space shake off his Government over them. After which

they

they come to an Ariſtocracie again, deviſing new Names and Officers for their Magiſtrates, and changing and rechanging them ſo oft, that ſometimes their State was no better order'd, than if it had been committed to Mad men, or Children without diſcretion, the City ſcarce twenty years together keeping the ſame form of State: but as ſick men in Feavers (ſays *Bodinus*) deſire to be removed now hither, and by and by thither, or from one bed to another, as if the Diſeaſe were in the places where they lay, and not in the intrals of their own Bodies; ſo were the *Florentines* ſtill turning their State, till they turn'd it into the hands of the *Medices*, who now hold it. A thing almoſt incredible, (ſays he) did not their own Recorder leave it recorded to poſterity.

But in the ſecond place let us deſcend to Families or Races of men that are lineally ſucceſſive for Name and Greatneſs.

And

And here let me ask, where are those Illustrious Families cried up so much in former times, and famous in their Generations?

As the Couragious Family of the *Maccabees* in *Jewry*, and of the *Ptolemies* in *Ægypt*.

Again, where is the *Zelzuccian* Family in the less *Asia*, and the Imperial Family of the *Palæologi* in *Greece*?

That of the *Merovignians* in *France*?

Of the *Plantagenets* in *England*, with many more of this rank I might name, did not the narrow compass of so small a Treatise bound me?

Tell me, is not the Name and Greatness of these Families long since expired, the Roots and Branches of them quite remov'd, and others planted in their rooms? Examples of this sort are innumerable, as *Elihu* says in *Job*: *He breaks in pieces mighty men without number*; (so mighty Families without number) *and sets up others in their stead.*

And

And as for such Families as are of a lower form, we need not go far; since our own knowledge here will lead us to continual changes and alterations.

For thou hast seen it may be many Families heretofore in this Nation, brim-full of earthly happiness, and running over; and now upon thy second view of them, behold there is no such thing, but they are much alter'd, and running very low in the world, if not clean run out.

So that prosperity (you see) was never yet so entail'd upon any Family, and the Heirs thereof, but within a little time some one or other hath cut it off.

But last of all, if we look upon particular persons, this will appear most evident; but especially if we consider them three ways. In respect of their Bodies, Minds, and Estates.

Gregory Nazianzen hath an excellent saying of the two former joyntly consider'd,

ſider'd, which is this; Ἡμεῖς τε γὰρ ἐ σμυθετοι μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀντίθετοι, καὶ ἀλλήλοις, καὶ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς· οὐσὲ ἐπὶ μιᾶς ἡμέρας οἱ αὐτοὶ καθαρῶς μένοντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ σώμασι, καὶ ψυχαῖς ἀεὶ ῥέοντες τε καὶ μεταπίπτοντες. *i. e.* We are not mixt Creatures only, but alſo contrary both to others and our ſelves: not continuing truly the ſame, no not ſo much as one day; but both in regard of our Bodies and Minds, perpetually flowing and perpetually changing.

And we can inſtance this in all the ſtages of our life, wherein by the ordinary courſe of Nature, we are firſt weak, and then ſtrong, and after weak again. As in our Childhood, we are then weak both in Body and Mind: in our Youth, ſtrong in Body and weak in Mind; and in our Manhood, ſtrong in both; but in our Old age, ſtrong in Mind and weak in Body; and in our Decrepit, weak again in both, as we were in our Childhood at the firſt.

But to leave this general conſideration of them, and to look upon them now more diſtinctly and ſeverally by

themſelves. And firſt for the change of particular Perſons in regard of their Bodies.

And here it is true of them, what *Seneca* affirms, *viz.* That *no man is the ſame to day, he was yeſterday: Ego ipſe* (ſays he) *dum hæc loquor mutari, mutatus ſum.* Our Bodies (ſays he) are like a River, which keeps nothing but the bare name that was firſt given it; for as touching the preſent individual matter, which is the watry ſubſtance of it, this is always tranſient, and other comes into its room: And ſo it is with the Body of Man, which is always receiving in new Air and Life, and venting the former. Which makes *David* profeſs of himſelf, that he was toſs'd up and down like the Locuſt; and *Job* compares Man for his bodily ſubſtance to a flower that never continues in one ſtay, *Job* 14. 2. For now we are ſtrong, and by and by weak; now beautiful, and preſently deformed. A little Fit of the Feaver, Small Pox, or the like, alters

alters us ſo, as if we were not the ſame men we were before; inſomuch that we hear ſome ſpeaking thus unto us,---- *Heu quantum mutatus ab illo!* Alas, how hath this fit alter'd you from what you were in your health! for how are your lips grown pallid, your cheeks diſcolour'd, your eyes ſunk into their holes, and your face quite disfigur'd! And others there be of our acquaintance that like *Jobs* three friends do lift up their eyes afar off, and know us not; ſo much are we chang'd in reſpect of our Bodies!

But Secondly, Let us conſider it alſo in reſpect of mens Minds.

And here (to ſay nothing of a moral change, which is obvious every where) as on the one ſide we find nothing more notable *Quinquennio Neronis*, than the firſt five years of *Nero*'s Reign, and more excellent than his Youth: Yet afterwards, having well taſted the ſweet morſel of Soveraignty, he became (ſays one) the moſt deteſtable Tyrant that

ever was: And ſo alſo of *Herod* the Great, *Philo* ſays, that he Reign'd ſix years as a good and juſt Prince, preſenting the *Protaſis* of his Reign with a large Fringe of Goodneſs about it; (as *Joaz*, *Amazias*, and *Ozias* did) but as for the *Cataſtrophe* of it, that was very ſad and fearful. So on the other ſide, we find *Manaſſeh* and *Paul* ſoaking the forepart of their Lives in Blood, being no better at firſt then *Nero* was at the laſt, even a piece of clay temper'd with blood; yet was their end like the end of *Davids* good man, *The end of that man is peace*, Pſal. 37. 37.

But to wave theſe, (whereof much might be ſaid, did it not quite lie out of my road I am now in) and to inſiſt only upon the changeableneſs that doth naturally adhere to the mind of man.

Now tell me, if any thing in the world may be ſaid to be more moveable than the mind of man.

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It is a Spiritual substance, and so is always moving, (though insensibly) from one thing unto another; never resting, until at last like *Noah*'s dove it be taken into the Heavenly Ark. S. *Chrysostome* therefore compares it to a Bird, which flies in a moment of time over Mountains and Hills, over Seas and Rocks, without any hinderance: for now it is upon the lowest Shrub, and presently upon the highest branch of the tallest Cedar; now upon heavenly, and within the twinkling of an eye upon earthly things; now at *Dan*, and in a trice at *Beersheba*; now at one part of the earth, and then at another: for sometimes it is soaring after *Principalities and Powers, and spiritual Wickednesses in high places*, as the Apostle speaks; then after Riches, and by and by after pleasures; now rejoycing, and then sorrowing; now quieted, and immediately troubled, and as soon pacified again; now hoping, and straightway fearing those hopes; now loving,

and then hating what it loved before. *Sic omnia mutabilitati ſubjacent* (ſays St. *Auguſtine*) Thus do all things lie down under mutability! And it amaz'd Saint *Bernard* much, to conſider how in the ſame moment of time his mind was not only diverſly, but likewiſe contrarily affected, and as it were pull'd a pieces betwixt love and hatred, joy and ſorrow, fear and hope; having as many varieties of affections within him, as there were diverſities of things in the world for them to light upon.

So that you ſee how the ſeveral Paſſions of our Minds do in a breath, and with the turning of a hand, ſteer divers ways, firſt looking one way, and then another, according as they are wheeled about with the motions of outward Contingencies.

But in the laſt place, we ſhall add unto the former, the great changes that particular men are ſubject to in regard of their outward Eſtates and Fortunes. For the condition of Mortals (ſays a

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Heathen man) hath its turns and returns, both of Prosperity and Adversity.

That as in a Military skirmish there be some come up to discharge, while others fall off: So is it in the World's *Militia.*

One there is that is rais'd out of the Dust to sit among Princes: whereas there is another that is flung down from the pinnacle of worldly joy and prosperity, and stated, as *Job* was, upon the Dunghil. And this doth the Preacher tell us, among the rest of those changes that fell under his observation, *That one comes out of Prison to Reign*, (as Queen *Elizabeth* did out of the Tower to the Throne) *whereas also* there is *he that is born in his Kingdom*, and *becomes* very *poor*; (as our *Henry* the Third was, while he lived sometimes on the Churches Alms.)

God hath appointed us (saith one well) all our parts to play, and hath not in their distribution been either spare-handed to the meanest, nor yet partial to the greatest.

He gave *Caius Marius* at first the part of a Carpenters Son, but afterwards the part of one that was seven times Consul. So also *Agathocles* the part of a Potters Son at the first, but afterwards of the King of *Sicily*.

So also on the other side, *Darius* play'd the part one while of the greatest Emperour, and another time of the most miserable Beggar, begging but a little water to quench the drought of Death. And *Bajazet* play'd the Grand Signior in the morning, but in the evening stood for *Tamerlains* footstool.

And *Jane Shore*, *Edward* the Fourths Minion, acts now as Mistress of a stately Palace, and a little after dies in a Ditch for want of a House; and (as he said of *Icarus*) so may we of her, That---*Nomina fecit aquis*, she gave Name to the place where she died, it being call'd from her *Shore-ditch* to this day.

But I forbear, since there is enough recorded for our use in the Sacred Scriptures to this purpose; where we find

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an example of the one in *David*, who says, that God *took him from following the Ewes with young*, and set him upon the Throne; there *to feed* (as he says) Jacob *his people*, *and* Israel *his Inheritance.* And to go lower yet, not only from the sheepfold, so he says, *Psal.* 113. 7. and 8 verses; *God takes the poor out of the Dust, and the needy out of the Dunghill, that he may set him among Princes, even with the Princes of his people.* Now more vile and contemptible than the Dust we tread upon, which the least breath of wind commands any way; or than the worst of dust, which is that of the Dunghil, we cannot be; yet these are they (says the Psalmist) whom he sets among Princes, even with the Princes of his people.

An example of the other we have in *Antiochus*, 2 *Mac.* 9. 9. who was so fill'd with Pride through the rankness of his Prosperity, that he thought he might command the Sea, (so proud was he, says the Text, beyond the condition of man)

man) and further, that he could weigh the Mountains in a ballance, and reach up to the Stars of Heaven: yet by and by is his Comb cut, all his Glory worm-eaten, and none able to endure him for the filthineſs of his ſmell.

Adde to this the example of *Balthazar*, *Dan.* 5. 5. who was now carouſing in the Conſecrated Veſſels that *Nebuchadnezzar* his Grandfather had plundred the Temple of, and Houſe of God at *Jeruſalem*, as you may ſee, 2 *Kings chap.* laſt. But in the ſame hour (ſays the Text) came out the hand-writing of the wall againſt him, and then was the Kings countenance chang'd, his thoughts troubled, the joynts of his Loyns looſed, and his Kingdom given away to the *Medes* and *Perſians*.

Thus are we for outward things like ſo many Counters, which ſtand one while for a pound, and another for a penny.

That as we ſee commonly in High-ways, where one man hath ſet his foot,

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another presently follows him and treads it out again; so is it usually, That if one man beat out an Honour or Estate to himself, another comes after and treads out that impression; and whose it shall be next, there is no man knows. Nay, *Lucan*, *Ipsa vices natura subit*---- Even the whole course of Nature runs about in a circular motion. Our Bodies, Minds, and outward felicities, whatsoever we are, or whatsoever we have, are all subject to change in such wise, that we can have no assurance of them, no not for a day. We know not what a day may bring forth.

And so much for the demonstration of this truth, *viz.* That there is such a Vicissitude.

The next thing is the Efficient Causes of it. For we never know any thing throughly, (says the Philosopher) until we know the Causes of it.

Now in speaking to this, I shall proceed, 1. Negatively, 2. Affirmatively.

1. Nega-

1. Negatively, in shewing what have been thought to be the causes of all Changes and Alterations, yet are not so indeed. And here the *Epicures* and vulgar Heathen have thought *Fortune* to be the cause of them: And they define it thus to be, *An Event of things without Reason.*

But how unreasonable it is to say, That an Event of Things without a Cause, should be the Cause of all Events, judge ye.

For it was only the ignorance of the true Causes, that made the name of *Fortune*; there being nothing fortuitous in it self, but only to us and our ignorance; since the power and providence of God hath the ordering and disposing of all things here below. And this did the wiser sort among them confess, as the Satyrist tells us.

Nullum numen abest si sit prudentia, sed te
Nos facimus Fortuna Deam-----

Others

Others again, as the *Stoicks*, make *Fate* or *Destiny* the cause of all Alterations, which they say is an Event that necessarily falls out, from a certain inevitable order and connection of Natural Causes, working without the will of God, as the Supreme Orderer and Disposer of them, he being subjected to them, and not they to him: whereby they take away the very Nature of the Godhead, which is to be a most powerful and free Agent, that works what, and by what means it pleases; all secondary causes depending upon that, and that upon none.

But enough of these: For I must remember my self, that I am now speaking to *Christians*, who acknowledge the Divine Providence in all things; and therefore shall speak no more of these Negative and supposed Causes, but shall now give you the true Efficicent Causes of them, by way of Affirmation.

And

And here know, that *Logicians* tell us of two Efficient Causes; Principal, and less Principal: And this is twofold, Impulsive, and Instrumental.

First then, the Principal Cause of all Changes and Alterations is God: for so said the Heathen man,

----------Valet ima summit
Mutare, & insignem attenuat Deus,
Obscura promens-------

But why borrow I weapons from the *Philistins* forge, when as there is enough for this, that may be drawn out of Gods Armory of the Scriptures? as *Psal.* 75. 6, 7. *Promotion*, says the Prophet, *comes neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South; but God is the Judge, he puts down one, and sets up another.* So also *Job* 34. 29. *When he gives Quietness, who can make Trouble?* and *when he hides his face, who can behold him; whether it be done* (says *Elihu*) *against a Nation, or against*

a particular man only? Again, *Amos* 5.8. *He makes the Seven Stars and* Orion, *and turns the ſhadow of Death into the morning: The Lord is his Name.*

The Oratour expreſſeth this well, by comparing Gods Omnipotency to the power of the Soul over the Members of the Body, which upon the leaſt intimation of the Mind do turn and move about with all facility. Now God (ſays he) is the ſole Mind of the Univerſe, and hath all parts and parcels thereof at his beck and pleaſure, to be turn'd into any ſhape or form at his diſpoſal.

Nay, it is no diſhonour for God to caſt the eye of his Providence upon the alteration even of the meaneſt things: for *who is like*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *to the Lord our God, who hath his dwelling on high, and yet humbles himſelf to behold the things in Heaven and Earth?* Not only to behold the things in Heaven, which is a great condeſcention to him, *whom the Heaven and the Heaven*

of

of Heavens cannot contain; but also the things in Earth. Now how unworthy these are of his taking notice of, you may see by those diminutive expressions of them, compared with Gods greatness, *Isa.* 40. 15. where the Prophet says, *Behold, the Nations are but as the drop of a Bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the Ballance; Behold, he takes up the Isles as a very little thing.* And if this be not low enough for them, he says further, *v.* 17. That *all Nations before him are as nothing, and are counted to him as less than nothing.* Now look what a wide difference there is betwixt the Sea and a Bucket of water, yea the drop of a Bucket; or betwixt a heap of dust, and the small dust of the ballance; betwixt very great and very little; betwixt all things and nothing at all, yea less then nothing, (if less could be:) so vast is the disproportion betwixt God and all Nations, which are the greatest among all earthly things. And yet for all this, is

God

God pleaſed ſo far to extenuate his own greatneſs, and to take off from it, as to look after them, and run them about in their ſeveral ſtages from one point unto another.

And if you would have this truth to be made out further unto you, our Saviour doth it, *Mat.* 10. 29. by two ſeveral inſtances.

The one is of two Sparrows, which are little birds and of ſmall value; but the *Greek* yet runs it more diminutively, δύο στρουθία two little ſparrows; and ſo they muſt needs be, for they were ſold both even for a farthing, and this is price little enough. Yet the *Arabick* makes it leſs, and hath for it *Phals*, which is the leaſt piece of money that can be; and accordingly expreſſes the two Mites ſpoken of, *Mark* 12. 42. (which makes but one Farthing) by *Phalſain* in the dual number, as a late and learned Expoſitor notes.

The other is of the Hairs upon our Heads, being a kind of Excrement be-

longing to our Bodies, and no integral or neceſſitous part of them, (as the Heart, Hands, and Feet are ;) and yet he tells us, that God numbers theſe, and takes ſuch a particular account of them, that not one of them falls to the ground without his diſpoſal.

In the viſion of the Wheels we read of a wheel within a wheel. Now the wheel within is the wheel of Gods Providence, that turns about the wheels of all outward things, be they never ſo low and mean. For as God doth not labour in doing the greateſt things, ſo neither doth he diſdain, either to do or undo the leaſt ; but as he *made the ſmall and great*, (ſays the book of *Wiſdom*) ſo alſo doth he *care for both alike*. The Potter having power over his Clay, either to make of it a veſſel of honour or diſhonour, and being made, either to preſerve it in that form and being he hath beſtowed upon it, or elſe to deform and deſtroy it, ſince it is equitable that every one ſhould do with his

own

own as he pleaſes. Nay, as he ſays of the gnat, that *Nuſquam potentior natura quam in minimis*; So may we ſay, that God doth no ways advance his Power and Wiſdom more, than in ordering of the leaſt accidents to be diſpoſed of to his Glory, and the good of his Children. And ſo much for the *Principal* Efficient cauſe.

The *leſs Principal* follows; which (as I ſaid) is either *Impulſive* or *Inſtrumental.*

Now the *Impulſive* cauſe of all Changes and Alterations is the ſin of man. This uſher'd them in at the firſt, and ſo it doth ſtill. For before *Adam* ſinned, he enjoyed a Paradiſe of conſtant and uninterrupted happineſs: but ſo ſoon as he ſins againſt God, then follows a great change preſently: For the Earth all fruitful before, now becomes barren, himſelf ſubject to labour, his Wife to Travail and Sorrow, and both to cares and troubles, to weakneſs and diſſolution. And ſo it is alſo with Na-

tions and Kingdoms. If they be chang'd at any time, ſin is the cauſe of it; and the greater their ſin is, the greater uſuſually is their change. Great ſinnings are the floud-gates to let in great Alterations upon them. For it is not a bare ſinning in a Nation, (from which there is none that could ever plead exemption) but a ſinning in ſome high meaſure, that is an in-let to Changes in the higheſt kind. Which made *David* ſay, *Pſal.* 107. 34. That *a fruitful land is turn'd into barrenneſs for the wickedneſs of thoſe that dwell therein*; which the vulgar Latine reads, *Propter malitiam, i. e.* for the *malicious wickedneſs* of thoſe that dwell therein; which notes a ſin of a high nature, *viz.* ſuch a one as is perſiſted in both againſt Knowledge and Conſcience. And therefore it is a good obſervation which *Muſculus* hath upon the words: *Theſe ſtrange Alterations*, ſays he, *of Nations and Kingdoms, are not for the ſinning of them, (from which no Nation can be free) but for*

for their malicious sinning. And this you may see farther in *Jerusalem*, *Ezek.* 21. where we read of a very great Judgment that should befal her from the *Babylonian*, *viz.* Utter Destruction, expressed by the threefold Overturn wherewith God threatens her, *v.* 27. And *v.* 24 he laies down the Impulsive cause that mov'd him to it; and this is an impudent and shameless sinning against God: for they did not commit their sin in a corner, as those that were asham'd of it, but (brazen-faced Wretches as they were) they declar'd their sin as *Sodom*, and discover'd it openly in the face of the Sun: and this they did too, not only in one or two particular acts, but generally, says the Text, in all their doings.

Now there is some hope of a modest and bashful, but none at all of a shameless and obdurate sinner. Thus the Father, when his Son hath done amiss, yet is he well perswaded of his amendment, if he but see him blush upon his re-

reproving of him. But when like *Judah*, he hath once a Whores forehead, and refuſes to be aſhamed, then doth he give him over as a loſt Child, and not to be recover'd.

So that from hence we ſee, that in what place ſoever we find ſuch a Turn, ſuch an Everſion as this, where all is turn'd upſide down) there hath been without queſtion ſome great *Averſio a Creatore ad Creaturam*, ſome great ſinning againſt God (as the Schoolmen call it.) Which was the reaſon that when the *Engliſh* were (now upon their quitting of *France*, in *Henry* the Sixth's days) demanded of the *French* by way of deriſion, when they would make their return thither; it was feelingly anſwered by one of our Nation thus, *When your ſins are greater than ours.*

It is ſin then that ruines particular perſons, that ſubverts Families, that periods Kingdoms, that wheels about Governments, that overturns States, that disjoynts Common-weals, and ſays un-

to

to them as to the proud waves, *Thus far ye shall go, and no farther.*

And so I have done with the Impulsive Cause, and come next to the Instrumental causes or means which God uses in effecting his Changes here; and they are two.

The first is the Motion and Influences of the Celestial Bodies.

And this will the better appear, if we consider their forcible workings upon the Mind of man. For though they cannot work immediately upon it, because it is immaterial; yet may they, and do work mediately upon it, as by the Body, which is the Instrument of the Soul to work by, and the Case wherein it is put up here for a time; and so make it either well or ill affected, according to the Bodies present temper. By which means it comes to pass many times, that not only the dispositions of particular men, but also of whole multitudes collected together in a Politick Body, are much alter'd and

chang'd, either to labour or Sloth, to Peace or Disquiet, to good or evil actings, according as they are inclin'd by the Motions of the Heavenly Bodies.

And that these Celestial Bodies have their energy upon all Sublunary things, is plain,

First, by Scripture; as *Job* 38. 33. where the Lord speaks thus to *Job*, *Know'st thou the Ordinances of Heaven? and canst thou set the dominion thereof in the Earth?* which implies,

1. That the Heavens have power and dominion in the Earth.

2. That this power of theirs is set them from Gods ordinance and appointment.

Secondly, by the constant Observation and Experience of all Ages. *Bodinus* the *French* Lawyer speaks well to this point; *Many erre* (says he) *greatly, who think the influence of the Celestial Spheres to be nothing, whenas their strength hath ever been most effectual, as in*

Sacred

Sacred Writ is to be seen: and he cites the 38. *chap.* of *Job* before-mentioned to prove the same. Adding further, *That many ancient Writers have noted the great Changes in Cities and Kingdoms upon the conjunction of the Superiour Planets, but to them only where they have been deputed of God to that end and purpose.* And that they have been instrumental towards the working of such effects, he shews by an induction of some particular instances: As, that before the translation of the *Roman* Soveraignty unto *Cæsar*, there was a great Conjunction of the Superiour Planets met together in *Scorpio:* which fell out again seven hundred years after, when the *Arabian* Legions received the Law of *Mahomet*, rebell'd against the *Greek* Emperours, and subdued the Eastern *Asia* from the *Christians.*

The same also came about again, *Anno Christi* 1464. after which *Ladamachus*, King of the *Tartars*, was by his Subjects thrust out of the Chair of

Sove-

Soveraignty ; and *Frederick* the Third driven out of *Hungary* by *Matthias Corvinus*, who from a Priſoner ſtept up to the Royal Throne, *&c.*

And *Alſtedius* tells us, that the Conjunction of *Saturn* and *Jupiter* in *February*, 1642. did foretell and portend the revolution of ſome new Empire and Government to fall out after it in *Europe*. The effect whereof in part (it's like) we have ſeen in this Nation already, and may live (if God ſo diſpoſe of us) to ſee further of it yet in time to come.

But to paſs this, and to come to that daily and uſual courſe of Gods proceedings with us in the world. Here methinks there ſhould be few, (though of ordinary capacities among us) but (if we be a little obſerving) may ſee this truth made good by the eye of our own experience, which tells us, that the Earth is either Fruitful or Barren, and the Air either Wholſome or Infectious, ſutably to that meaſure and manner of influence they receive from them. And

And therefore when God will at any time bring about some great change in the world, it is then easie to see how usually he fits his inferiour means, according to their several natures, for the orderly transacting of it in those stations wherein he hath set them. As, when he will turn a fruitful Land into barrenness, and again, a barren Land into fruitfulness, (which he promis'd his own people, *Hos.* 2. 21.) there he tells them in what order he will work it: *I will hear* (says he) *the Heavens, and they shall hear the Earth, and they shall hear* Jezreel. For this is a sure rule, That the Supreme Cause of all doth not take away the natures and workings of Secondary Causes, but rather establish them: which is the reason of that Speech of God to *Job*, in the ordinary revolution of the times and seasons of the year, *Job* 38. 31. *Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the* Pleiades, *and loose the bonds of* Orion?

Now

Now the *Pleiades* are those we commonly call the Seven Stars, that have their influence on the earth, by producing sweet showres to the opening and refreshing of it, about the Spring of the year; and *Orion* is a Constellation most conspicuous in the Winter-season, as having a commissionary power to bind up the earth with Frosts. Again, *canst thou bring forth* Mazzaroth *in his season*, (*i.e.* the twelve Signes successively after one another) *or guide* Arcturus *with his Sons?* (*i. e.* the Polar Star, as some will have it, with those *ignes minores* that wait upon him; or *Bootes*, as others.) It is not then so much the Earth, as the Heavens that give us either fruit, or withhold it; they being the first ordinary means, whereby God uses to work out alterations in sublunary things.

The second Instrumental cause of these strange Vicissitudes here below, is the Will of Man: for though it have not a liberty to Spiritual, yet all grant

it a liberty to external acts, and moral goodness. And this Liberty of Mans Will, doth God use as an under-wheel to turn about most of those Alterations that are in the world.

It is true, that Health and Sickness, Peace and War, Plenty and Scarcity, Riches and Poverty, proceed from God as the principal Efficient cause; but yet for all this we deny not but that God makes use both of our selves and others, as to the means of bringing them about. The life of *Joseph* was checquer'd with variety of accidents: for he is now a Slave to the *Ismaelites*, and by and by a Prince in *Ægypt*. Now these although they proceeded from God as the Author, yet was the will of his Brethren, as the will of *Reuben* and *Judah*, the instruments of preserving his life, and the wills of his other Brethren the means of selling him into *Ægypt*.

Now because it is the Nature of Instruments to be subservient to the principal Agent, and to be determin'd by it;

it; therefore give me leave here by the way to fasten this exhortation upon you, That in all Changes whatsoever you will look beyond the Instruments of them, unto God the Principal Agent. For so did *Job* in his losses, beyond the plundring *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans*, unto *Dominus abstulit*, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away*; looking upon them as we use to do upon an *Index*, *tantum in ordine ad Librum*, only in order to the Book it self, *Et in transitu ad Deum*, in his passage unto God, who sets them a work, as to their natural powers and faculties, though to the evil of them no otherwise, than by ordering and over-ruling it to the good of his Children. And hence it is, that the wicked are called Gods Sword, as in the 17 *Psalm*, *v.* 13. *Deliver my Soul* (says *David*) *from the wicked which is thy Sword.* And so must we in all those Losses that befal us here, have in our eye not so much the Sword, as the Hand that holds it: which will be one means,

and

and a good one too, to bring us to *Davids* calm temper in the 39 *Psal.* 19. who says in the like condition, *That he was dumb, and did not open his mouth*, nor let fall an impatient word in it, because it was Gods doing: And therefore when *Abishai* would have taken away *Shimei*'s life for cursing of *David*, No, (says he) *Let him alone, Jussit enim Dominus, for the Lord hath bidden him curse; who then shall say, Wherefore hast thou done so? q. d.* Who then dare expostulate with God, or call him to account about it, as if he were unrighteous in it; since evil men are but Swords in Gods hand, who, when he hath once done his work by them, will either put them up again into his Scabbard, and lay them by, or else so blunt the edge of their power, that it shall not cut, or else break them a pieces, and throw them quite away? And so much for the Efficient Causes of Vicissitudes.

Next I shall speak to the Ends, or Final Causes of them.

And these are either *Ex parte Dei*, or *Nostri*; in respect of God, or our selves.

First, in respect of God; and so the Principal End why God rings such Changes upon all earthly things, and will have them disposed of after so various a manner; is to make them by it the more tunable to his own Glory, which by this means is exceedingly magnifyed and advanced: but especially in the Attributes of his Power, Truth, Wisdom, and Goodness.

1. In his Power and Omnipotency: that so he may let the world know, that the Finger of his Power is in all Transactions; and that he can do whatsoever he will, both in Heaven and Earth, and yet changes not.

For why else did God work so many miraculous Changes in *Ægypt* by the hand of *Moses*?

Why

Why turned he *Moſes* Rod into a Serpent, and the *Ægyptian* waters into Blood?

Why their Duſt into Lice and Flies, and their Light into Darkneſs for the ſpace of three days together?

Why elſe Created he a new generation of Frogs and Locuſts among them?

Why unheard-of Diſeaſes upon themſelves, and upon their Cattel?

Why deſtroyed he their Herbs and Fruit-trees with Hail, and their firſt-born with untimely death?

In a word, Why cauſed he the Red-ſea to go out of its natural courſe and chanel, whereby it became a wall to the *Iſraelites*, and a grave to the *Ægyptians*?

Did not God all this to make known the glory of his power, in the preſervation of the one and deſtruction of the other? Yes; *For this cauſe* (ſays God to *Moſes*) *I have raiſed thee up, to ſhew in thee my power, and that my Name may be declared in all the earth.*

2. He advances also his Glory this way, by manifesting his Truth and Faithfulness: in that those things which are accidental in regard of us, and seem as impossible, yet are they exactly brought to pass in their due times and seasons. As in the bringing of the *Israelites* out of *Ægypt*, wherein God was full as good as his word, and kept touch with them to a day in their Deliverance, as you may see, *Exod.* 12.41. where we read, *That it came to pass in the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out of the land of* Ægypt. All *Pharaoh*'s oppositions and tergiversations could not prorogue their Bondage so much as one day beyond the time prefixed of God, but serv'd only to fill up that *Interim*, or void space of time betwixt Gods Promise made to *Abraham* and his performance of it.

And if you ask by what intervals of time the truth of this promise came about

bout so punctually, Divines will tell you, That from *Abraham*'s receiving of the promise, unto the birth of *Isaac*, were five and twenty years; sixty from thence to *Jacobs* birth; and to his death (which fell out presently upon their entrance into *Ægypt*) a hundred and thirty years. After which unto the death of *Levi*, who was *Ultimus Patriarcharum*, the last of the Patriarchs that survived, and in which space the *Israelites* were kindly entreated for *Joseph*'s sake, were ninety four years; and a hundred and one and twenty more of cruel Bondage, until *Moses* came to deliver them from it in the Reign of *Pharaoh Cencres*.

All which particulars being gathered up together, do make up the compleat sum of four hundred and thirty years, and may serve to justifie God in all his sayings, and to clear his Truth in the least circumstance and punctilio of time, when it shall come to be judged.

For when once Gods appointed time is come to introduce a change, either for better or worse, among any people, then shall every breath of wind, how cross soever it seems to blow at the present, yet be so far from hindring Gods work in it, as that one way or other you shall find it in the sequel, to contribute its help and assistance to it.

3. God advances also his Glory this way, in the manifestation of his Wisdom and Goodness; in that he makes a sweet harmony of so many different cords and changes, and frames a most admirable Order out of a seeming Disorder and Confusion.

Many and divers are the qualities of Herbs, yet if a skilful Simpler hath the mixing of them, he knows how to make of them a well-relish'd and wholsome Sallade: So, many were the interchangeable passages that happen'd to *Joseph*; and had we the same, it may be we should think them very confused ones; but yet let the Wisdom and Good-

Goodneſs of God but lay them together, and we ſhall preſently find, as *Joſeph* did, the cloſe of them all in a ſweet *Diapaſon.*

For though all things, as to us, are floating up and down, to and again, by chance as it were and accident; τῇ τάξει δὲ τῆς προνοίας πάγια καὶ ἀκίνητα, καὶ διὰ τῶν ἐναντίων ἑδρύει, ſays *Gregory Nazianzen*; yet if we look to the order and appointment of Gods Providence, (which doth always moſt wiſely contrive all events for the good of his Children) they are fixt and ſtable, howbeit they may ſeem to go contrary at the preſent.

And of Gods dealing in this kind we have *Job* an eminent example; who is to day the greateſt man for Wealth and Honour in all the Eaſt, (and a Tablet of this his Greatneſs you may ſee in his 29 Chapter, which I deſire you to read over at your leiſure) wherein you ſhall find a whole *ſeries* of worldly proſperity to wait upon him;) yet to morrow he is poor, even to a by-word

and proverb, *As poor as* Job: insomuch as he spends all the next Chapter in bemoaning his suddain change, beginning it with a *But*; which though a small Monosyllable, yet as the Helm of a Ship turns about the Vessel any way, so doth this *But* turn about *Job*, and all his former Honour and Prosperity, into the extremest contempt and adversity. *But now*, says he, *they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my Flock*; and ending it with this doleful accent, verse last, *versa est cithara mea in luctum, & organum in vocem flentium*; *My harp is turned into mourning, and my organ into the voice of those that weep.*

Yet all is well (we say) that ends well; and so it was with *Job*, which makes Saint *James* say, by way of support unto Gods people in their afflictions, *Ye have heard of the patience of* Job, *and have seen the end of the Lord*; *i. e.* what

what good end God gave him in it; for the next day God brings a great deal of Light out of this Darkneſs, by a wiſe and gracious diſpoſing of all that evil to him for the beſt, in giving him twice as much as he had at the firſt, and bleſſing his later end more than his beginning.

So that although for a time all thoſe ſad Changes that befell *Job*, ſeem'd even to croſs the ordinary courſe of Gods care and Providence to him; yet in the concluſion you ſee how his Wiſdom and Goodneſs cut them all out, and made them ſerve to his greater Honour and Abundance.

And ſo much for the Ends or Final Cauſes in reſpect of God.

They follow now in reſpect of our ſelves.

And theſe are two: firſt to confirm our Faith; ſecondly to reform our Lives, and to work out by them good to his ſervants.

First, to confirm our Faith.

And so God brings many times great Changes into the world, to try, if amidst those shakings of outward things among us, we will be shaken in our Faith, or not. That as the Apostle speaks of Heresies, 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. *Oportet esse Hæreses*, *There must be Heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest*; so say I, *Oportet esse mutationes*, There must be Changes: and these not so much in respect of the things themselves, which are in their own natures liable to alteration and dissolution; as in respect of Gods end in it, that they which are approved and sincere in the Faith, may be manifested to be so, by their constancy and perseverance in it. That as there is a necessity of Fire to try Gold, whether it be true or else counterfeit; so also is there a necessity of Changes: for by these it will appear, whether we will measure our Religion by outward things, and in the loss or enjoyment of them

be

be loſt in our Proteſtant Faith, yea or no.

There is nothing, Beloved, more diſcovers the Hypocrite than his *Ingenium verſatile*, (as *Livy* ſaid of *Cato*) than his turning humour in Religion: for which I do not ſay he ſhall be plagued in Hell, by being wheel'd about there continually without any relaxation, (though that may ſeem a puniſhment ſomewhat ſuitable to his Weathercock-diſpoſition here upon earth;) no, *Hoc nimis Ethnicum*, This is too heatheniſh: but rather with the Prophet *David*, That *he ſhall turn into Hell with all thoſe that forget God*, which is that portion of Hypocrites mentioned by our Saviour, *Matth.* 24. laſt.

For if an Apple be rotten at the coare, it will not hold long upon the Tree, but upon the leaſt Wind will fall from it. And ſo it is with the rotten-hearted Hypocrite; if a little croſs wind do but blow upon him, oh how ſoon doth he fall off from the Tree of Life,

Life, and become a wind-fall in his Religion, for the Devil that old Serpent to prey upon!

Every Cock-boat (you know) will bear up well enough in a calm sea: but that is a stout Vessel that can live in the most troubled water. And too too many there were in the Primitive times, that like *Dr. Pendleton* in Queen *Maries* days, boasted much of their Constancy in the Orthodox Faith during *Constantines* days, so long as God hedg'd about his Vineyard with Peace and Prosperity; but so soon as that Hedge was broken down, and erroneous, yea Heretical Doctrines were let in like so many Beasts of prey to devour, then how quickly did these prove Turncoats, and Apostates from the Faith!

But as for the true Christian, he is like a Rock,-----*Mediis immotus in undis*; That although the waves are always swelling against him, yet is he the same man still in his Reformed Religion, and wavers not: or else like that House

built

built upon the Rock, againſt which the Floods came, and the Winds blew, but it fell not, becauſe it was built upon a Rock.

And ſuch a well-built houſe was St. *Baſil*, who being threatned with death by *Valens*, if he would not adviſe further and turn *Arrian*, anſwer'd with this brave reſolution, *I need not any further advice than I have taken already about this matter; for to morrow I ſhall be the ſame man that I am to day therein, and no other.*

And here know that ſome things are of Neceſſity, wherein we cannot but change, as in natural, civil, and moral things; and to change in theſe is only humane.

Others again are of Duty: and theſe either prohibited, or enjoyn'd.

1. Prohibited, as in evil and erroneous things: and to change here is pious and divine; and not to change, either Weakneſs or Obſtinacy.

2. En-

2. Enjoyn'd, as in ſacred and religious: and to change here is impious and Diabolical; and not to change, true Chriſtian Fortitude and Conſtancy.

Whatſoever things we ſee then wheeling about in the world, as Governments, Families and the like; nay, howſoever we may change our ſelves or be chang'd in ſome things of an indifferent nature, by thoſe that have dominion over our Bodies and Eſtates; yet is there no man that hath dominion over our Faith: But this is Gods peculiar, and therefore in this we muſt not change.

It is not with ſaving Truths as it is with Clothes, which alter every year as the faſhion doth: for *the faſhion of the world paſſes away* (ſays St. *John*;) but true Religion is ever in faſhion with good men, and alters not.

And herein we may juſtly take occaſion to bewail the unſteadineſs of ſome in theſe times, who are mere *Scepticks* in Religion, always conceiving ſome new

new Opinions in it, and always in pain till they be deliver'd of their new conceptions, though never so *monstrous* and *deformed.*

That which was truth with them yesterday, is no such thing to day; and what is so to day, is otherwise to morrow; such Changelings there be in this last Age, who like the Moon do never appear the same two days together! *And I would to God*, (says St. *Ambrose*,) *that their change were no worse than that of the Moon*; *for she returns again within a little time to her full light, but these never.*

And he is blind that sees not this among us, (namely) how some turn every day to *Popish* Superstition, but more to *Anabaptistical* Fancies; some unto *Socinian* Blasphemies, but most unto *Atheistical* Notions, and all into Sensuality; this being the common Sewer into which all the former run, and are ultimately resolved.

But as St. *Paul* said to his *Galathians*,

so

so do I to such, *O foolish* Galathians, *who hath bewitch'd you that you should not obey the Gospel?* And it is a metaphor, says one, from Sorcerers, who use to cast a mist before the peoples eyes, that so they may not take a right view of what is presented to them: As if he had said, Who hath cast a mist before the eyes of your understandings, to make that appear unto you for truth which indeed is not? What? *Are ye so foolish, that having begun in the Spirit, ye will be perfected in the Flesh?* So, Are ye so foolish, that having begun in truth, ye will end in falshood? or can ye be so simple, as to exchange Gold for Dirt, Wheat for Chaff, and your pretious Faith, as St. *Peter* calls it, which is the substance of things hoped for, for Errours of all sorts, and mere shadows of Truth? I trow not. For if Errour (as our *Kingly Divine* said well) have any advantage, it consists in Novelty: or if Truth any, it consists in Constancy.

Was

Was the Doctrine then of the Reformed Churches, and the Harmony of our Confessions grounded upon evident and pregnant Scriptures, maintain'd by the Orthodox and Primitive Fathers, and conveyed to us by the constant tradition of the Universal Church, the Faith of Christ once deliver'd to the Saints, and the Truth of God yesterday? why, so it is to day, and will be to morrow also. And therefore to day in our profession of it we must be as yesterday, and to morrow as this day: because as God is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; so also is the Truth of God, That which was once so, will be so always, and cannot be otherwise.

Oh that we would then be exhorted in the *Apostles* words, To *stand fast in the Faith, to quit our selves like men, and be strong: and not to be as children, toss'd to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine; but to be as men in understanding, stedfast and im-*

move-

moveable; that so God may have cause to glory on our behalf; as he did on *Jobs*, *Hast thou consider'd* (says God to Satan) *my servant* Job? So, hast thou consider'd such a servant of mine? Seest thou to how many changes I have subjected him? to changes in his Children, to changes in his Estate, to changes in his Liberty, to changes in his Friends and Acquaintance? Nay, seest thou how many of his Brethren are chang'd of late, from a febrish distemper before, now into a sleepy Lethargy? Seest thou how indifferent they are for their Religion round about him, and how many shaken reeds there are on every side of him? And yet for all this, as my servant *Job* did, so doth he still hold his integrity. But enough of this.

Secondly, Gods end also in it is, To reform our Lives, and do us good by his so various dispensations towards us Hence we read, *Isa.* 30. 28. of a sieve of vanity, wherein God says, he will

sift

ſift the Nations, and ſhake them to and fro one after another, that ſo he may winnow them from that chaff of ſin that is within them. For why was *Moab at eaſe from his youth?* why *ſetled he upon his lees*, and held ſtill his *corrupt taſt?* but becauſe he was never diſquieted, nor *emptied from veſſel to veſſel*, *Jer.* 48. 11. Thus a ſedentary life we find very ſubject to Diſeaſes; and a long ſtanding Proſperity to a Nation, is like a ſtanding Pool, whoſe water doth ſoon puddle and putrifie. And this is the reaſon of that ſpeech of *David*, *Pſal.* 55. 19. *Becauſe they have no Changes therefore they fear not God*; making by it the uncheckt proſperity of worldly men, a great occaſion of their continuance in ſin, and ſo an *Index* of Gods Wrath upon them, rather than of his ſpecial Favour to them.

And therefore now we have ſeen the Angel of God moving the waters of this Church and State by Inteſtine War, new Opinions in Religion, by Sects, di-

visions, and the like; it will be good for us to meditate, how God hereby intends to purge us from that sinful filth that adheres to us, as our disrespect to Gods Ministers, and contempt of his Word, our Cruelty and Oppression, our Pride and Security, our Worldly-mindedness, and Hypocrisie.

Indeed men, who are the instruments of them, may have other ends in such Alterations, as to wreak their own spleen upon their Adversaries, to unhorse others, and get themselves into the Saddle either of Profit or Preferment; (That as *Demetrius* the Silversmith said, *We get our gains by this means*; so say they, We get our Honours and Estates by these means, for if the waters had not been troubled, we had catch'd nothing:) or else to satisfie their own corrupt wills and pleasures; as the Author to the *Hebrews* says of earthly parents, That they chasten their children after their own pleasure, but God who is the Supreme Agent, he doth it for

for our profit, and not his own; there being no ends of gold and silver, no mere will or revenge in his end, but only our profit, and to take away the dross from the silver, that so he may bring forth (to use *Solomon*'s expression) a *Vas electum* a chosen Vessel, as St. *Paul* was, and fit for the Finer.

Thus the Scripture tells us of *Joseph*, how he was pass'd over from his brethren to the *Ismaelites*, and from them to *Potiphar*; and his Brethren had one end in it, but God another: for they did it for evil against him, (as he tells them himself) and to get twenty Pieces by the sale of him; but as for God, he meant it to him for good, and to save much people alive.

And so also was Christ the Antitype of *Joseph*, thrust (as we say) from post to pillar, *viz.* from *Judas* to *Caiaphas*, from him to *Pilate*, from *Pilate* to *Herod*, from *Herod* back again to *Pilate*, and then into the hands of the clamorous and unreasonable multitude to be

fied; and *Judas* had one end in Christs death, but God another. The end of *Judas* in it was to silver his bag with thirty pieces, but Gods end was to satisfie his own Justice, and to save Mankind by it.

So that let mens sinful ends in these Changes and Alterations be what they will, yet is Gods end in it the gaining of glory to himself, by his taking away that sin and corruption which he sees contracted in us by a long standing security. And if these changes of his be not as a gentle fire to purifie us, they shall be as a consuming fire to destoy us.

And so much for the Efficient and Final causes of Vicissitudes.

The *Uses* follow; and they are three.

First, To take us off from our greedy desire of worldly things.

Secondly, To unpride us in a prosperous condition.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, To comfort and support us in an afflicted one.

And to this purpose there is a good saying of *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, the best of all the Heathen Emperours, which is this:

Meditate (says he) *with thy self how swiftly all things that subsist are carried away: for both the substances themselves are in a continual flux, and all actions in a perpetual change; yea the causes of them also, subject to a thousand alterations, neither is there any thing that can be said to be setled or at a stand.*

And from hence he draws this inference: *Art thou not then unwise, who for these things art either distracted with cares, puffed up too much with pride, or dejected with troubles?*

And it may put many of us Christians to the blush, who seldom make so good use of it as this Heathen did, though we have a far clearer light than he had to guide us to it.

Firſt then, the conſideration of this point, *viz.* The great Viciſſitude and Inconſtancy of all earthly things, may ſerve to wean our hearts from the pleaſing teat of this world, and to raiſe them up to that place where only fixed good is found.

Here we are all too apt with the rich fool to ſet down our reſts, when (God knows) we have little or no cauſe ſo to do. *Neſcis enim, ah neſcis ſerus quid veſper ferat*; Since we do not know what the midwifery of this evening, nay leſs, of this hour or moment may help to bring forth.

It may be a change of our Eſtates into Beggery, by Fire, Thieves, and the like; or elſe of our Liberty into Thraldome, or of our Health into Sickneſs; all theſe ſucceſſively wheeling about, until at laſt our great change come from Life to Death, and ſwallow up the reſt, as the ſea doth the waters that fall into it.

Alas!

Alas! here we are subject to a thousand casualties; but in Heaven, there, there we shall meet with no such alterations; for that is a Kingdom that cannot be shaken as earthly Kingdoms are, either by War, Factions, all-eating time, or the like. No, but there is Peace without War, Quiet without Trouble, Freedom without Thraldome, Day without Night, Health without Sickness, and Life without Death: whereas here it is far otherwise; for God takes away one it may be, with a Feaver, another with the Sword, as Saint *Augustine* reckons them up. Nay, *he cuts off the spirits of Princes* (says the *Psalmist*:) which *Junius* and *Tremelius* Translate by *Vindemiat*, *i.e.* he slips them off as a Vintager doth a Bunch of Grapes from a Tree, it is so quickly done. Even the highest enterprizes that the greatest Magnifico's of the earth undertake, God doth but blow upon them a little with the breath of his displeasure, and how soon are they blasted and shrink away to nothing!

An example of this we have in *Xerxes*, who went againſt *Greece* with a Million of men, and as many Ships as covered the *Helleſpont*; as if he would have ſubdued the Sea, have put a hook into her jaws, and have led her away in triumph: yet how ſoon was his over-bold pride daſhed in pieces by a hand-ful of Greeks! One and the ſame day ſaw him both happy and miſerable; uſing him as a tender and indulgent Mother in the morning, but in the evening as a cruel and hard Stepdame.

Oh the folly then of thoſe that lye always ſucking at theſe earthly flowers, which are as various in their ſhapes, as ever *Proteus* was, and conſtant in nothing ſave in their inconſtancy!

It was the ſaying of *Maximilian* the Second, That every year of our life was a Climacterical year, and brought with it ſome great change or other.

And if every year be ſo changeable, what fools then are they that joyn land to land, and houſe to houſe, that they may

may dwell alone in the earth! yea what mean great men to pride it so much in their *Babels* here below, and out of a greedy desire of gain to run out of their own Chanels, and to call their Lands by their own names? For they that do thus, declare plainly that they think themselves to enjoy a setled estate here on earth, as if they should never see a change, or at least did not for the present look for in Heaven a better and more enduring substance, as the Author to the *Hebrews* speaks, *Heb.* 12.34.

And yet as the Prophet *Isaiah* complains, so may we, *Quis credidit auditui nostro? who hath believed our report?* or to whom is this truth of God revealed? For it is strange to see how few among us do believe this, that both in our persons and estates we are so changeable.

But *this is their way*, says *David*, *this is their foolishness.*

For how soon did *Galba* start aside from the Empire, *Degustans Imperium*, tast-

tasting it only, as *Jonathan* did the Honey with the end of his Spear! How soon was *Haman* chang'd from the Minion of the Court, to be the hang-by of the world!

Again, how soon was *Nebuchadnezzar* chang'd, even from a Man to a Beast: and *Herod* from the highest of Men, to be Meat even for the lowest of Reptiles?

And the prosperity of *Richard* the Third was so short (says our incomparable Historian) that it took end ere himself could well look over it.

There is not any thing then that we can call constant here on earth; which makes the Authour to the *Hebrews*, speaking of *Abraham*, say, That *he looked for a City having foundations*: Upon which one gives us this Note; That the Heavenly City can only be said to have properly a Foundation, whereas those Cities that are on earth, do shew plainly by their daily ruines, that they have no sure foundation to rest upon.

Oh

Oh let this be a means to take off the wheels of our Affections from their eager pursuit after earthly things, and set them upon things above, *where the moth cannot come at them, nor thieves break through to steal.* And let us look to that charge of the Apostle, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. *Charge those that are rich in the world, that they trust not in uncertain Riches*; or rather in Riches which are Uncertainty it self in the abstract; (for so the *Greek* runs it; ὁπὶ πλούτε ἀδηλότητι *i.e.* in the uncertainty of Riches.) And that we may in no wise doubt of this their uncertainty, the Wise man prefixes a note of certainty before this uncertainty, *Certainly* (says he) *Riches make themselves wings, and fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven:* as if he should have said, Certainly Riches and all worldly things are as uncertain as a Bird that is upon the wing: and therefore we must not *set our hearts upon them*; but our daily prayer and practice must be, *So to pass through things temporal, that so we*

do

do not loose those things that are eternal: or else with *David* let us beseech God to *incline our hearts unto his Testimonies, and not to Covetousness.* Now this inclining our hearts unto Gods Testimonies, is nothing else but that holy and penitential change of Heart and Life, or else that turning unto God with all our hearts, which God calls for at our hands, and expects from us in all his changes, whether personal or else National; which if he find in us then let what changes soever fall, they shall all work together for our good: but if not, we must then look to be as a rowling stone, and to have our daily turns and changes in this life from one degree of misery to another, until at last we turn into Hell, as *David* speaks, *with all those that forget God.*

Secondly, The consideration of this point may be a good antidote against Pride in a prosperous Condition, since God hath so ordered the Web of our Lives,

Lives, as that Adverſity as well as Proſperity is interwoven in it: For there is nothing that ſwells us up ſo much, as proſpering here in worldly things; and nothing again that is more effectual to aſſwage this ſwelling in us, than to conſider the brevity and mutability it is ſubject to.

Now it ſwells us up with a high opinion either of our own Goodneſs above others, or elſe of our own Greatneſs.

1. Our proſpering in worldly things ſwells us up with a high opinion of our own Goodneſs above others; as

1. It makes us think our ſelves the only good men in Gods eye, becauſe we are proſperous in the worlds; whereas indeed, this can be no certain rule to meaſure out any ſuch thing by, ſince the world and the proſperity of it is ſo variable and uncertain.

And therefore, when at any time God ſhall water us more than others with the lower ſprings of his earthly Bleſſings,

Bleſſings, we are not therefore to have an overweening conceit of our ſelves, and our own cauſes, above others, (as if God upon this ground had tyed his ſpecial love either to us or them:) For you know that when God would chuſe a King for *Iſrael*, he choſe him not by outward and periſhing excellencies, for then he would have choſen in the room of *Saul*, *Eliab*, *Aminadab*, or *Shammah*, who were the three elder brothers of *David*, and men of goodly perſonages to look upon; yet God choſe none of theſe, (ſays the Text) but *David* the youngeſt of them, though not ſo outwardly, yet inwardly glorious, being a man after his own heart.

It is the chief Argument the *Turks* uſe at this day, to prove themſelves the only *Muſſelmen*, or true believers; We thrive (ſay they) and proſper in the world: for how hath our *Mahometaniſm* over-run all *Aſia*, *Africk*, and the greater part of *Europe* too! And do not

not they among us then reason more like *Turks* than *Christians*, who speak after this manner, Come, see how we bear down all before us, and ride upon the backs of the poor in triumph! Thus and thus do we prosper in the world, and do even what we list; and is not this an evident sign we are Gods Children, and that the right end of the staff is ours? Sure, if we were other than Gods peculiar people, he would not bless us so much as he doth.

But to these I answer, That these and such like are only *Bona Scabelli*, (as Divines distinguish well out of that place of *Isaiah*) and not *Bona Throni*, the Goods of Gods Footstool, (but earthen ware) and not the good things of his Throne, which are Grace and Glory; & therefore can set upon us only an earthly mark for men here to take notice of us, but not any heavenly cognizance for God to look upon us, as upon his dear and elect Children. For else it would easily follow, That the *Alchoran* were bet-

better than the *Bible*, and the *Turks* fancie better than our Faith of *Christianity*.

And were there no other signal place of Scripture for this, than that of the Prophet *David* in his 73. *Psalm*, (as indeed there are very many) this alone (methinks) were enough to impress this as a truth upon us, where he speaks of some that are not in trouble like other men, but pride compasseth them about as a chain, violence covers them as a garment, their eyes stand out with fatness, and they have more than their heart can wish; yet these (says he) *v.* 12. are the ungodly who prosper in the world. And the Prophet *Jeremy* makes bold to question with God about it, in these words, *Jer.* 12. 1, 2. *Wherefore*, says he, *doth the wicked prosper? and why are all they in wealth that rebelliously transgress?* and he rests satisfied with this, verse 3. That God did by that prosperity of theirs fatten them as sheep to the slaughter, and prepare them for the

the day of destruction. And this is that prosperity of fools that the Wise man speaks of, which will destroy them, *Prov.* 1.32.

It is not then our thriving in Temporals, but in Spirituals, that speaks us and our Faith to be accepted of God.

For the truth of Grace or Religion, and the goodness of a mans Cause, is not measured by the Souldiers Sword, but by the Word of God, which is the Sword of the Spirit.

God Saints no man for his goodly Personage, for his Riches, for his politick head-piece of contriving, and bringing about his own worldly and sinister ends, or for his Arms and Conquests; for then *Saul* and *Crœsus*, *Ahitophel* and *Alexander* the Great had been high in Gods book: but he values Men only by their Spirituals, as their graces of Faith, Humility, Patience, Meekness, Obedience, and the like: and where he finds these, (how unfurnished soever they are otherwise) yet *these are mine*,

saith the Lord ; and in that day when I shall make up my Jewels , I will spare them , even as a Father doth his Son ; and then shall ye discern between the righteous and the wicked , betwixt him that feareth God , and him that feareth him not.

Indeed God may sometimes permit evil to prosper in the world, but never approve of it: for so acknowledges the *Jewish* Church, *Lament.* 3.35. *To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High,* or *to subvert a man in his cause , the Lord approves it not.* And therefore to argue from Gods permission to his approbation, is a gross *Non sequitur*, nay more, a laying our iniquity on Gods back, as if he would take it well at our hands to be made a Packhorse at every turn to bear all our execrable burdens, and were (as *David* speaks) such a one as our selves, to favour evil courses, or else to own them as his off-spring.

Which

Which made *Dionyſius* the elder conclude Sacriledge to be no ſin, when he had rob'd the Temple at *Locri*, becauſe the Gods ſeem'd (as it were) to ſmile upon the action, in giving them fair Winds and Weather, both in their voyage thither and return back again.

But, as it was a great Blaſphemy (ſays one) for the Devil to perſonate God, when he would be *ſimilis Altiſſimo*; ſo is it greater to make God perſonate the Devil. And yet this he doth, that makes God patronize his evil, becauſe he proſpers in it; for this brings in God ſaying, That he will be like the Prince of Darkneſs, and makes the Holy Ghoſt to leave his Dove-like ſhape, and come only to us in the form of a greedy Raven or Vultur.

2. As our proſpering in worldly things ſwells us up too high with an opinion of our own Goodneſs, and makes us think better of our ſelves than is meet; ſo alſo doth it on the other

ſide lift us up too far with thoughts of evil towards our brethren, and make us think worſe of them, and the ways of God they walk in, than we ſhould, by charging them as utterly deſerted of God, becauſe we ſee not now the ſame hedge of Gods favour about them as heretofore we did, but the ſtakes that then prop'd them up, are now thrown away as uſeleſs and unſerviceable. Whereas Afflictions on this hand are every way as temporary and tranſient, as Proſperity was on the other; and being ſo, muſt needs be as a broken reed, or a reed of *Egypt*, wherewith we cannot exactly meaſure Gods Temple, nor the Spiritual eſtate of his Children.

It was a hard ſtumbling-block to the Prophet *David* for a time, when he ſays that his *feet were almoſt gone, and his footſteps had well-nigh ſlipt*, upon his ſight of the wickeds proſperity; until he went into the Sanctuary of Gods Word, where he learnt to ſettle his wavering and diſtruſtful thoughts: for there

there he saw, that notwithstanding his outward afflictions, that God held him up under that sore temptation with his right hand, and would (in opposition to transitory goods, which are the proper blessings of the wicked, because they have no others but these to trust unto) guide him with that which should infinitely exceed them, to wit, his Counsel here, and his Glory hereafter.

And it was the great question so much agitated betwixt *Job* and his Friends, Whether those doleful changes that befel him were the cognizance of his insincerity to God, and of Gods disfavour to him upon it, yea or no. His Friends taking advantage upon his present weakness and distemper, maintain it strongly against him in the affirmative, that they were: until at length God himself steps in to the rescue of the weaker side, and makes the conclusion (as all Logical conclusions do) to follow the weaker part, determining it for *Job* against his Opponents in the

Negative, and telling them, that they ſpake not of *Job*, nor of his proceedings towards him that which was right, *Job* laſt, verſe 7.

Seneca a *Stoick* Philoſopher, hath a ſet diſcourſe to this purpoſe, *Cur bonis viris mala eveniant*, why the evils of this life moſt commonly fall out to good men: and he concludes it thus, That temporal evils are no ſign of Gods hatred to them. For, doſt thou think (ſays he) that the *Lacedemonians* hated their Children, when as they experimented their diſpoſition to virtue by ſtripes in publick? No. So, do we think Gods Children in disfavour with him, becauſe he lays here ſore blows upon their Bodies and Eſtates by evil men, as his rods and ſcourges in it? No; for we ſee and feel many times (ſays an experimental patient of our own well) the deep lines and ſtrokes of Gods hand upon us, when as we cannot by our skill in Palmeſtry decipher his meaning in it, no more than the

Mal-

Malteſes could by the viper upon Saint *Pauls* hand judge of his condition to God-ward.

For God ſometimes (that we may not thus judge) inverts humane order, and runs out his dealings towards us in the ordinary chanel of his univerſal Providence, Juſtice and Equity, by which he waters here all alike.

Indeed they may ſeem (I grant) to go counter to our apprehended rules of common right: yet are they always agreeing both with Gods ſecret and revealed will, though (like the Sun in its ſphere) not perceptible to us, becauſe too myſterious and dazzling: however, many pretend to interpret them by a blaze of fire lighted at the natural pride of their own private ſpirits, and that dimme twilight of knowledge which is in them; whenas they are altogether in the dark to the true light of Gods word and works herein.

And here take in the opinion alſo of *Epictetus* another *Stoick* and Heathen

man, which ſpeaks moſt Chriſtianly to this point, namely, That all are not hated of God, who do wraſtle here with variety of Miſeries: but that there are with God good cauſes of it, though ſo ſecret that few can reach them.

And therefore, albeit we cannot ſee how theſe actings of God may ſtand with his tender love to his children, and ſo may conceive an ill opinion of them; yet when we ſhall think ſeriouſly, that Gods thoughts and ways are not as ours, it will teach us to give them a more favourable interpretation.

For how dare humane raſhneſs (ſays Saint *Bernard*) reprehend that which it cannot comprehend; in giving demonſtrative reaſon why worldly proſperity ſhould be Virtues ſtepdame, and not her natural mother!

But (to cloſe up this Diſcourſe) you ſee here by what hath been ſaid, that it is a great errour (howbeit now grown more than popular) to judge of perſons

ſons and cauſes by the events, whenas *all* outward *things* (ſays *Solomon*) *fall alike to all, neither can any judge of love or hatred by what is before him:* Proſperity and Adverſity being but ſeparable accidents to them, and no eſſential properties of them, becauſe they are grounded upon worldly things, that have ſo looſe and mouldring a foundation, as that a man cannot tell concerning them what a day may bring forth. Again,

2. As worldly proſperity ſwells us up with a high opinion of our own Goodneſs above others, ſo likewiſe of our own Greatneſs. And this makes us ſlight thoſe that are under us, and deal hardly with them, (as to temporal things) which we would not do, if we once conſider'd the mutability of it.

And therefore if at any time God ſhall give up unto us thoſe we conceit our enemies, to be dealt with (if we will) by all harſhneſs and extremity; yet are not we then to trample upon them

them in the pride of our hearts, nor to adde more load to that which God hath already laid upon them; but rather to take off from it what we can, and to use them with all gentleness and compassion, with all mildness and moderation, as considering our selves, that we are not here to live always as Gods upon earth, the same yesterday, to day and for ever: but what is the bitter cup of their portion to day, may be ours to morrow.

It speaks out but a coarse and ignoble spirit, to crow and insult over those that are down. The very Heathen thought it so, who had only the glimmering of Nature to guide them; much more ought we Christians, whom the Apostle exhorts, that our *moderation may be known to all men.* That as the Apostle will have his *Corinthians* to *use the world with a* tanquam, *as if they used it not*; so must they among us, that have wealth, power and authority, so use them, as if they used them not: that

that so when they shall fail us, (as they will ere long, since the wind blows not always out of one and the same favourable quarter) we may then be able to say with comfort, That we never misemployed those talents of Gods outward favour to us unto the pressure and destruction of our Brethren, but only to their relief and preservation.

The Prophet *David* in his Tenth *Psalm*, speaks of some, who *through the pride of their countenance do not seek after God, neither is God in all their thoughts.* But *their ways are always grievous*; *they puff at their enemies, and say in their hearts, they shall never be moved, nor be in adversity.*

And such were the *Babylonians*, who (besides their barbarous cruelty to the *Israelites* under captivity) added this above all, that they scoffed and jeered at them in their miseries, with *Sing us now one of the Songs of* Sion. So also were the *Edomites*, *v.* 7. who cryed over *Jerusalem* in the day of her visitation,

tation, *Raſe it, raſe it even to the foundations.*

And were we ſure that the ſun of our earthly Happineſs would always ſtand ſtill in this our *Gibeon*, it may be we might take liberty to do the like, and think we did well in it too. But when as we come to conſider ſeriouſly, that there is no Solſtice here upon earth, but ſo ſoon as the Sun is come to his furtheſt Summer-point in our Horizon, it is then preſently vertical, and turning again to make winter-weather with us, how will this aſſwage that ſwelling of pride that is within us, and make us humble?

To this purpoſe there is a memorable Hiſtory of *Caganus* King of the *Huns*, unto whom *Theodorus Medicus* being ſent in an Embaſſy from *Mauritius* the Emperour, to divert thoſe ſwarms of people wherewith *Caganus* at that time threatned to ſtorm the Empire, he apply'd himſelf to him in theſe words; *Audi* Cagane, *utilem narrationem* Seſoſtris,

ſtris, *&c.* Hear, ſays he to *Caganus*, a profitable Narrative of *Seſoſtris* King of *Ægypt*, who being lifted up too high with his great ſucceſſes againſt his enemies, cauſed four Kings taken priſoners to draw his Triumphal Chariot, wherein one of them looked back with ſmiles to the wheel of the Chariot, and being demanded his reaſon for it, anſwered, *That he ſmiled to ſee the ſpoak of the wheel now at the top, to be preſently at the bottom; and again, that which is now at the bottom, to be by and by at the top.* The very hearing whereof did ſo mollifie, and keep down the haughty Princes ſpirit, that it drew him a little to forbear his acts of hoſtility againſt the Emperour.

And from this Topick alſo of volubility, did *Crœſus* draw an argument to diſſwade *Cyrus* from his intended inrode into *Scythia:* for if thou didſt lead (ſays he) an immortal Army, then is there no need for thee to ask my advice in it; but if thou doſt acknowledge thy

thy ſelf a man, and a leader of mortals, then think that there is a wheel of humane affairs that turns about continually, and ſuffers nothing here below to ſtand long upon the ſame bottom.

But this advice of *Crœſus* took no place with *Cyrus*; If it had, he would have kept himſelf (as the *Tortoiſe* doth) *intra teſtudinem*, within his own ſhell, within his own dominions, and not have cauſeleſly uſurped upon the rightful poſſeſſions of others to his own deſtruction: for ſee the iſſue and event of it!

Even that God who is infinite in his Wiſdom, and terrible in his Power and Juſtice, he that reſiſts the proud, and looks upon them afar off; He (I ſay) made the pride of *Cyrus* ſerve as a ſnare to take himſelf in, and to work his ruine: for he was no ſooner entred *Scythia*, but he found by ſad experience how unconſtant the World was, not looking now upon him with that

ſmiling

ſmiling aſpect it did before; but the wind was now in another quarter, and (as the Wiſe man ſays of Riches, that *they make themſelves wings and fly away*) ſo did his former proſperity betake her ſelf now to her wings, and flew away, his whole Army being quite defeated, and himſelf ſlain by *Tomyris* Queen of *Scythia*.

A good example to make the ſecure wretch look about him, and to pull down the high looks of the proud.

And therefore when ever any fluſhing of pride begins to riſe within thee, and to bud forth, as it is in *Ezekiel*, into violence, and oppreſſion of others, then think thou heareſt ſome Monitor calling unto thee, as King *Philips* Page did to him, *Memento te eſſe mortalem*, remember that thou art Mortal: ſo, remember that thou art changeable as well as others, and this will be an excellent means to keep it in.

For tell me, would *Cyrus*, think you, have invaded *Scythia*, had he thought

ſo

ſo ſad a fate would have attended him in it?

Or would *Pharaoh* have oppreſs'd the *Iſraelites* ſo much, had he thought that God would have tumbled him up and down ſo much as he did, from one plague to another, and at laſt made the ſea his champion to revenge their injuries upon him?

Or would *Joſeph*'s brethren have perſecuted him as they did, if they had thought he ſhould afterwards have been lord over them?

Or the *Gileadites* have expelled *Jephtha*, had they known he would have been ſuch a ſhelter againſt a ſtorm, and of ſuch uſe unto them againſt the *Ammonites*?

Or (to ſay no more) would *Darius* have call'd *Alexander Philip*'s boy in deriſion of him, had he known that he ſhould have been conquered by him?

No, little do proud men think that the water which is now in the float, will preſently be in the ebbe; and that the

the ſpoak of the wheel which is now at the top, may quickly be at the bottome: and then he that is the greateſt now among us, may come (how ſoon he knows not) to ſtand in need of the meaneſt creature whom he now deſpiſes.

It is wiſdome then for every Chriſtian, whenas he is at the top of the wheel, and may lord it over thoſe that are beneath, yet not to overlook them with a ſcornful eye, but to let down his ſpirit, and (as the Apoſtle exhorts us) to condeſcend to men of low degree: For one ſcale is not always in depreſſion. No, This were *dura infœlicitas*, a very hard and high meaſure of infelicity. Neither is the other always in elevation: This were *fœlicitas miſeranda*, a happineſs to be pitied. But the alternate wave of the beam keeps them both in awe, and eſpecially the proud perſon, who ſeems unto me as a bird tied to a ſtring, which if it fly too high, the hand draws in the ſtring and pulls it

down again. And so if we shall let out our spirits too high with pride, God hath then a line of vicissitude in his hand to pull us in at his pleasure.

The Prophet *David* said in his prosperity, that he should never be moved; his mountain was made so strong; yet God did but hide his face from him a little, and he was troubled.

Naturally then we are too apt to know no measure in a high fortune; but (as a person of Honour and Piety in this Nation said) although in the heat of summer we easily believe there will come after it a cold season of frost and snow, yet are we so stupid as in Prosperity not to consider of Adversity, though the one be as successive as the other. And this makes us to exalt our selves so much above all that is called God. That as it is observable touching the Book of *Esther* (which is nothing else but a Declaration of acts done in reference to the Greatness, Power and Glory of *Ahasuerus* the *Persian* Monarch,

narch, as to the principal instrument of them) that in that whole Book the Name of God is not so much as mentioned at all: So doth it also commonly fall out, that while we are here in the ruff of our worldly Glory and Prosperity, we seldom or never speak of God, and as seldome think of him, but set our selves up in his room, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did, who spake too big, and too much of himself, saying, *Is not this great Babel that I have built for the house of my Kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?* As the fly said in the Apologue when it was got up to the top of the wheel, See what a dust I make! So, see what a dust makes this poor Worm, what a *Mying* there is with him in the height of his pride! nothing but *my* Kingdom, *my* Power, and *my* Majesty: but as for God, *Ne gry quidem*, There is not a word of him; He is not in all his thoughts.

And therefore how ſoon the houſe of his Kingdom fell upon his head, yea how ſhort-liv'd the might of his power was, and the honour of his Majeſty, you may ſee by the next verſe, where it is ſaid, That while the word was in the Kings mouth, there fell a voice from Heaven, ſaying, *O* Nebuchadnezzar, *to thee be it ſpoken, Thy Kingdom is departed from thee.*

The world then may well be compared to the Sea of glaſs which Saint *John* ſaw in his viſion, *Revelat.*4.6. and there be alſo, that from the reſemblance of the one to the other, interpret it thus. For

Firſt, It reſembles the Sea either for its ebbing and flowing; or elſe for the ſuddain change of it: for how ſoon is the face of the Sea alter'd? in one and the ſame hour (it may be) thou mayſt ſee her ſmiling upon thy veſſel, and frowning too; playing with it, and ſwallowing it up. *Noli igitur* (ſays the Moraliſt) *tranquillitati ejus credere, i. e.*

Do

Do not therefore truſt too much to her ſmooth and calm looks; *in hoc enim momento mare evertitur*, for in one moment doth ſhe appear wrinkled vvith billovvs, and turns about from a calm unto a ſtorm.

Secondly, It reſembles alſo glaſs, and that either for its brittleneſs, becauſe nothing is ſooner broken: or elſe for its ſlipperineſs, becauſe he that walks upon glaſs can have no ſure footing; and therefore for any man to preſume upon the ſteadineſs of it, muſt needs be very dangerous.

That as the ancient *Romans* uſed to diſtinguiſh their days into *Dies albi*, and *Dies atri*, white and black days: ſo doth God, and there is no man but hath the later of theſe as well as the former, his black as well as his white days.

Oh the madneſs then of wicked men, vvho are alvvays plotting againſt the righteous, and gnaſhing upon them vvith their teeth! *At ridebit Deus*, ſays *David*, *But God ſhall laugh at them* for it:

and he gives this reaſon, *v.* 13. *becauſe he ſees that their day is coming*, *i. e.* he ſees clearly that their black and diſmal day is coming upon them, though themſelves will not ſee it through the pride and ſecurity of their ſpirits; yea, and he knows alſo punctually when it will be, though we know it not: for though to day may be fair and ſhining, yet may to morrow be dark and tempeſtuous with them; ſince we know not what a day may bring forth.

Laſt of all, (becauſe I am loath that my Sun ſhould ſet in a cloud) The conſideration of this point may ſerve as a good antidote againſt deſpair in an afflicted condition; or as a cordial to ſtay up our ſpirits in the ſaddeſt and moſt diſtreſſed times, and to teach us patience and contentedneſs in them: that ſo as in proſperity we ſhould not ſay, we ſhall never be moved, ſo neither in adverſity, that we ſhall never be delivered; when we ſhall conſider, that what weight of affliction ſoever we lye under,

under, is not of a continuant, but of a changeable nature. And to this end we have the ſure ſtaff of Gods promiſe unto his children to lean upon, as in the tenth Chapter to the *Hebrews*, where he ſays thus, *Yet a little while*, or rather as it runs in the *Greek*, yet how very very little while, (with a double diminutive) *and he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry.* And in the precedent verſe he tells them, they have need of patience, that they may receive this promiſe. And in the twelfth Chapter to the *Hebrews*, the Apoſtle takes up an exhortation to it from the Wiſe man, and makes a conſolatory uſe of it to his *Hebrews*, withal taking them to task for their forgetfulneſs of it; *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which ſpeaks unto you, as unto children: My Son, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtning of the Lord, nor faint*, or be not broken in mind (as others tranſlate it) *when thou art rebuked of him.* For *we had* (ſays he) *the fathers of the fleſh, who verily*

chaſtened us a few days after their own pleaſure, and *we* were patient under their rod, and *gave them reverence, but God* a few days only, *for our profit. Shall we not then be much rather in ſubjection to him who is the father of ſpirits, and live?*

Thus when *Boetius*, that Chriſtian Conſul and Martyr at *Rome*, was wrongfully deprived by *Theodoricus* of his Honours, Eſtate and Liberty, Philoſophy brings in what we call Gods Providence, comforting him in theſe words:

I turn about my wheel continually, and delight to tumble things upſide down; why then doth thy heart ſhrink within thee, when as this changeableneſs of mine is cauſe enough for thee to hope for better things?

And ſo alſo, when many of our Brethren were heretofore in Exile for their Religion in Queen *Maries* days, what (I pray) did that *Jewel* of our Church comfort them with, but onely this, *Hæc non durabunt, ætatem*; Theſe will not endure

endure an Age? as indeed you know they did not, her Reign being not full out six years time.

And with the same consideration also should we chear up our selves now under that black cloud that hangs over the Church, that it will not endure an Age, but be as *Ephraim's* righteousness was, even as the morning cloud, or as the early dew that passes away.

To this end, it will not be amiss to note, how the afflictions of Gods people in the Scripture, are run out not by any long tract of time, as by an Age, Year, Month, Week, or the like; but by the shortest measures that can be, as by a Day: now a Day (you know) holds not long, but is quickly gone, even as a flying Bird, or a Poast that runneth by. And thus good *Hezekiah* calls the time of *Sennacheribs* rage against *Judah*, a Day of trouble, *Isa.* 37. *v.* 3.

Or if this be not enough, you have them then contracted within a lesser room, and measur'd onely by a Night, which

which is no more but the dark side of a natural Day, and therefore is a great deal shorter. And this made the Prophet *David* say, *Psal.* 30. *v.* 5. That *heavinesse may endure for a Night, but joy cometh in the Morning.* The time then that heavinesse shall endure to the Godly can be but a Night at the longest, but whether it shall be so long or no, the Prophet is very uncertain and unsatisfied, for which cause he expresses it here with a *May be*, *Heavinesse may endure for a Night.*

But if this expression be not full enough to set forth the brevity of them, our *Saviour* doth it then by an Hour, which is shorter yet, and but the four and twentieth part of a natural Day; for so he calls the time of his persecution by the High Priests and Elders of the people, Their *hour, and the power of Darkness, Luke* 22. 53.

Or, if this be yet too long a space to set forth the brevity of their afflictions, and to give a through Comfort to Gods people,

people, their little continuance is then expreſs'd by a Moment, which I am ſure is ſhort enough; ſo you have it *Iſa.* 54. *v.* 7. *For a ſmall moment* (ſays God to his Church) *have I forſaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee:* And again, v. 8. *In a little wrath I hid my Face from thee for a moment, but with everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy upon thee.*

Or laſt of all, if any time can be ſhorter than this, it muſt then be the preſent time; yet ſuch are the ſufferings of Gods children, in St. *Pauls* account, but *the ſufferings of the preſent time*, Rom. 8. 18. and a ſhorter time than this there cannot be. For as the *French* our Neighbours are ſaid to be for their inconſiderateneſs, *Animalia ſine præterito & futuro*, Creatures that have reſpect neither to time paſt nor time to come: ſo may we ſay of the preſent time, That it is as ſhort a meaſure as can poſſibly be imagined, having in it nothing either of time paſt

or

or future, the first of the two being dead already, and the later of them being not yet born unto us. And yet we see here for all this, that St. *Paul*, when he had cast up the account of all which he suffered in the cause of Christ, how he reckons and concludes it to be onely the suffering of the present time, and not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.

A Prayer.

ALmighty God, who rulest the Sea *of this World by thy power, and whose paths are in the roughest* Waters; *We the unworthiest of all thy Servants commit our frail* Barks, *with all that we have, to the* Steerage *of thee our great* Pilot, *and faithful Preserver: beseeching thee so to order by thy good hand of Providence all outward contingencies to us, that we may be able to* bear up *through them with a steady and even* Course, *against the several* Storms *we shall meet with in this* passage *to our blessed* Harbour *of Eternity. And however earthly things may like* Watery Billows *be every day* rowling up *and* down *in their vicissitudes about us; yet suffer, oh suffer not the Heavenly truth of our Reformed Religion to* flote *about any longer so uncertainly among us,*

nor

nor our ſelves to be as Children toſs'd *to and fro with every* Wind *of Doctrine. But let us be conſtant and unwavering in the profeſſion of that Holy Faith we have received; and (Thou that art the God of Truth) be graciouſly pleaſed to* ſtay *us* up *firmly in it by the ſacred Scriptures, which are thy Word of Truth, and the ſole* Anchor *of our Faith to reſt upon. Lord,* pull in *the* Sails *of our deſires towards fleeting and tranſitory ſubſtances: for who will caſt his eyes upon that which hath wings to flee away as an Eagle towards Heaven!* Ballaſt *our Spirits with Humility in a proſperous condition; and when we have the higheſt and moſt pleaſing* Gale *of the worlds favour for us, give us to* ſtrike *our* ſpreading Sails *of Pride, and to make our Lenity and Moderation to be known to all men, for the Lord is nigh at hand. But if thou in thy juſt judgment againſt us for our manifold and hainous ſins, ſhalt cauſe ſome* croſs wind *or other to* blow *upon us, and give us over to* Shipvvrack *in our temporals;*

rals ; Supply then, we entreat thee, their want with thy ſpirituals of Patience, Faith, and other ſuffering graces ; That although the tempeſt *be never ſo* boiſterous *without, yet we may enjoy within a Chriſtian* calmneſs *of Spirit, in a happy quietude and contentedneſs of mind with all thy dealings towards us, and not ſet down our reſt upon the Creature, which is ſo reſtleſs with us, but amidſt the ſundry and various changes of the world, may there fix our Hearts, where onely true and unchangeable joys are to be found, through* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord.*

FINIS.

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